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# MEMOIR

OF

# WILBERFORCE RICHMOND,

THE SECOND SON OF THE

## REV. LEGH RICHMOND.

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PREPARED FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

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# PREFACE.

The materials of this little volume, are chiefly drawn from a very interesting recent work, entitled, "Domestic Portraiture." It was thought that the publication of this memoir, in a form suitable for Sabbath-school libraries, and for circulation among the young, might be of great advantage to the cause of piety. It would be difficult to point out a more interesting and satisfactory example of early, eminent piety, and of blissful departure from life. The providence which thus early removes those who bid so fair for usefulness, is mysterious, but wise.

"He told me," said his sister, "how seriously it had been impressed on his mind, THAT HIS DEATH WAS TO BE THE LIFE OF OTHERS." That this impression may be re-

alized, that the reader may follow his example, may enjoy a like triumphant death, and glorious immortality, is the prayer of the COMPILER.

PHILADELPHIA, April 13, 1833.

# MEMOIR, &c.

## CHAPTER I.

THE subject of this memoir was born in Turvey Rectory, August 20, 1807. Soon after his birth, he was received into the Christian Church by the rite of baptism, when his father called him Wilberforce. This name was justly dear to Mr. Richmond, as it was borne by one who was, under God, the means of his conversion.

The following anecdote of the infancy of the subject of this memoir, is interesting, when viewed in connexion with his future history. It was related by his father.

"I cannot forget a circumstance which occurred in his infancy: his mother and myself were on a visit to a friend's house. A large family were assembled at morning prayers, and amongst them was our little boy in his nurse's arms. An aged and venerable minister was conducting the family worship. In the midst of his prayer the child began to cry.

The good man paused, and beckoned the servant to give him the infant. He took him in his arms, and held him for several minutes, during which he offered up most affecting petitions on his behalf, praying earnestly, and in a manner that touched all our hearts, that it might please God to bless him for time and eternity; that if his life were spared, he might be a blessing to his parents and the Church of God, and finally have an inheritance with the saints in light. He then returned the child, now pacified, to the nurse's arms, and resumed the general subject of his prayer, which had been thus interrupted. There was an affecting singularity in the transaction, which much interested us at the time, and now that I am engaged in the retrospective view of what passed from the cradle to the grave of my beloved son, it recurs to my recollection with peculiar emotions of heart. The venerable man of God is long since gone to his rest, but his prayer was recorded in heaven, and the Lord in mercy has given it a gracious answer."

When he was a little more than two years old, he fell from a window, on the pavement,

and though he recovered from the accident, he was lame ever afterwards. This kept him from many boyish sports, which are often the means of leading those who practice them into sin. It obliged him to seek for amusement in other ways, and thus led him to acquire a taste for mental pleasures. His father had a fine little museum of curious things, with which it gave him pleasure to make Wilberforce acquainted. He also had a philosophical apparatus with which he used to make many interesting experiments. Wilberforce thus acquired a great deal of valuable knowledge, with what were his amusements. He was fond of study, and made rapid progress in science of every kind, but especially in mathematics. His teacher, in a letter to his father, respecting him, makes the following remarks:

"I marked the superior endowments of his mind in the first hours of our intercourse, and was confirmed in my opinion by each succeeding year. He caught an idea quickly, never seemed to forget it, for his memory was remarkably strong and retentive, and he made

more rapid and solid attainments than any boy placed under my care. At a very early period he read Euclid, and surprised me with his acute and sensible observations on the character of pure mathematics. He appeared delighted to master a difficult problem, and before he was twelve years of age, had exceeded the advance of many men of two years' standing at the University."

His excellent father began very early to teach him the fear of the Lord. When he could scarcely lisp in accents of prayer or praise, Mr. R. composed the following little piece to be committed to memory, and repeated to his mother every evening.

### WILBERFORCE'S EVENING ADDRESS TO MAMMA.

MAMMA, 'tis Jesus loves my soul,
And makes the wounded sinner whole;
My nature is by sin defiled,
Yet Jesus loves a little child.

I know my temper is not right,
I'm often fretful, scold and fight;
I would like him be meek and mild,
For Jesus loves a little child,

How kind is Jesus, oh! how good!
For my poor soul, he shed his blood;
For children's sake he was reviled,
Yet Jesus loves a little child.

When I offend you by my tongue,
And say and do what's very wrong,
O pray mamma be reconciled,
For Jesus loves your little child.

He teaches me to shed a tear,
Whene'er I grieve a friend so dear;
But though I am so thoughtless, wild,
Yet Jesus loves the little child.

To me may Jesus now impart
Although so young, a gracious heart;
Alas! I'm oft by sin defiled,
Yet Jesus loves the little child.

And I love Him, for he loves me,
And hope his faithful child to be;
The Sinner's Friend he's justly styled,
And Jesus loves your little child."

Whenever Mr. Richmond was obliged to leave home for a time, he always used to write to his children, even if they were very small, to express his affection for them, and to give them good advice. The following is a letter that he wrote to Wilberforce.

"DEAREST LITTLE BOY,

"As I was journeying near York last Saturday, where should I suddenly find myself but in a little village called *Wilberforce*, as my driver, and the way-post informed me. 'Dear me,' said I to my fellow-traveller, 'how a certain little lad of my acquaintance, would be surprised and pleased had he been in the chaise this moment.' So I got out and walked up and down in Wilberforce, thinking and talking about that said little lad. It is a pretty little place. As I loved the name, both for your sake, and for the sake of Henrietta's godfather, I amused myself with asking different people the name of the place, and every body's answer was the same. I asked an old man, 'What is this village called?' '*Wilberforce*, an' please your reverence,' said he, and so said all the rest; and thus I pleased myself with making a great many people speak your name, till one of them said, 'I canna think wots the matter wi' the mon; he made us aw say the same thing. Mayhop the mon's a foo.' Now all that was the matter with me, was that

I loved you, and it quite pleased me to hear your name when I so little expected it.

"On Thursday last I saw a gentleman and a lady mount up in a balloon, a mile high into the air, and after sailing there near an hour, they came down again quite safe. On Saturday I went to see the finest Church in all England. It is more beautiful than all the Churches I ever saw put together. To-day I have visited the wonderful dropping well of Knaresborough, which petrifies, after a time, whatever it touches. To-morrow I am going to see one of the finest ruins in the kingdom, Fountain's Abbey. Look at your map, it is near Ripon in Yorkshire. This day I received a most beautiful letter from the Russian Princess Sophia Metcskersky of St. Petersburgh. I think I never had so pretty a letter. What makes it so pretty? It is because it is about Jesus Christ. *Nothing is good or right or pretty without him. He only is altogether lovely.*

"I hope both your leg and your lessons go on well. If they do, you must thank Mr. C—— for the one, and Mr. G. (to whom give

my love) for the other, and God for both. * * * * Last night, at ten o'clock, I saw the Aurora Borealis, like a white rainbow stretching all over the sky. On Monday I went to see the iron founders make cannon. They melted the iron in a huge hot furnace, it ran out along the ground like a little river of liquid fire—very terrific!

"I have picked up many curious stones for the museum. God bless you, my little boy, and God bless Henry. Tell him I love him, and I hope he loves me. Kiss all your brothers and sisters for me, and tell them all to be very good. Behave well to dear mamma, and Mr. G——, and so good bye

From your loving papa,

L. Richmond."

As Wilberforce grew older, he became more and more thoughtful on the subject of religion, and before he was eleven years old, gave his friends some reason to hope that he was a real Christian. His father, however, was still very anxious about his salvation, as will appear from the following letter. It was written from Stockport, in Lancashire.

"DEAR WILLY,

"Are you indeed a good boy during my absence? Shall I have no cause for heart-ache on my return, when I ask how my child has behaved? How he has obeyed his mamma? How he has attended to his lessons? How he has submitted to his sister's instructions? How he has conducted himself towards Mr. G——? How he has adhered to truth in his words? How he has set H—— a good example? Shall I be comforted with the glad tidings, that your heart and your conscience, and your ways, all seem to partake of a happy influence? that you throw away all indolence of mind and body? that you actively pursue learning and gain it? that your brother improves every day through the effect of your good behaviour? that you seldom or ever quarrel, snap, or snarl at him? that you pray to God to forgive your sins and hourly offences? Shall I be told that you have prepared a happy return home for papa, by his hearing all this good of you, when he comes back? Do the four walls of your little chamber bear witness to your prayers and supplications for your-

self and me? Do the sun's rays as they early penetrate your window in the morning, find you active to rise, to read, to labour, and to grow in grace? * * * * *

I have seen some beautiful counties since I left you. Staffordshire is full of beauty. Lichfield cathedral too, which, though much smaller than York Minster, is a very fine building: I attended divine service there, the organ notes rolled sublimely along the vaulted arches, pillars, and roof. The exquisitely painted windows assimilated to the sounds, and rendered the effect most enchanting. The spires are beautiful, and large sums have been laid out in repairing and restoring them.

"One evening I travelled with a friend in a gig for three hours, amidst the never-ceasing distant lightning. The whole western hemisphere was in a constant blaze. The flashes alternated from one point of the horizon to another, distant about forty-five degrees from each other; sometimes the flashes were silvery, sometimes yellow, then orange colour; one while sheet-like, and again so vivid, that we seemed to have a peep into more distant

regions of space; then more faint, now and then we heard slight rumblings; then all was silent again. At one point the flashes gleamed on the ruins of a distant castle which appeared all on fire; a dark forest lay behind, and it formed a fine contrast. Sometimes the forked flashes pursued one another in a kind of playful progress; at others they dashed at each other as if in terrible combat; all this passed between seven and ten in the evening.

"But what are these lightnings, compared with those which made Moses quake and tremble at Mount Sinai, or what were even these contrasted with the lightnings of God's wrath against sinners? These appearances of nature are striking emblems of Divine justice. You have need to flee from the wrath to come. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The wicked and all the people that forget God, shall be turned into hell. Dear Willy, if you forget him, what will be your portion? If you say that you do not forget him, how do you prove it?

Video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor,

is the character of too many nominal Christians. I would not have it to be yours; an enlightened converted mind; with eyes and tongue to approve what is right, but the feet walking in the paths of evil. A converted heart alone will enable you to follow his steps, who is 'the way, the truth, and the life.'

"I sincerely hope that you are beginning to be truly sensible of the evil and danger of sin, and the necessity of seeking God betimes. Occasional indispositions should remind you, that you may never arrive at man's estate. If you are to die a boy, we must look for a boy's religion, a boy's knowledge, a boy's faith, a boy's Saviour, a boy's salvation; or else a boy's ignorance, a boy's obstinacy, a boy's unbelief, a boy's idolatry, a boy's destruction. Remember all this, and beware of sin; above all dread the sinfulness of an estranged heart. Pray for a new one; pray for grace and pardon, and a soul conformed to the image of Christ; pray for wisdom, for the destruction of pride, vain conceit, and self-sufficiency. Be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Friends here inquire after you,

in the full hope that you are going on well, creditably, obediently, industriously, humbly and christianly. Love to all, from

Your affectionate Father,

L. R."

It was Mr. Richmond's desire that all his sons should be ministers. To this sacred office Wilberforce was dedicated from his birth. Mr. R., however, did not desire to see him a minister, without decided and ardent piety. He said "he would rather follow his son to the grave, than see him in the Church without being fitted for such a sacred office."

Hitherto Wilberforce had maintained a reserve towards his father on the subject of personal religion, that was very painful to him. In the following letter, written when he was about fourteen years of age, he, in a degree, laid it aside.

"My dear Father,

"You will believe me, when I say, that I entirely and most thoroughly agree with you, 'that it is time we should communicate frequently, intimately, and confidentially.' I

feel very thankful that you have so plainly declared your thoughts and determination concerning me: I know my inability to answer you in the way you wish, but I rejoice in an opportunity of telling you what my thoughts have been and still are in respect of the most important subject of your inquiry. I deeply regret that a false shame has hitherto deterred me from an open avowal of my sentiments and feelings. I will honestly confess to you, that I have never *seriously* considered the subject of the ministry till within the last few months. Brought up from my infancy with the expectation of becoming a clergyman, and accustomed as I have been to think and speak of it as my future profession, I have been little aware of the difficulty, and have not sufficiently considered the responsibility of the office which I hoped would one day be mine. You know how much this prospect has pleased me all through my childhood. I have had many fears and alarms about my sinful state, but they soon faded away. The impression has never been permanent till dear little Atherton died. At that time it pleased God to awaken

in me a deeper sense of my dangerous condition, and I prayed very earnestly that God would pardon my sins for Christ Jesus' sake, and that the Holy Spirit would renew my heart. Then I fell into another error, for I began to trust myself instead of the Saviour. I thought I was now proof against temptation, and had the presumption to suppose myself fit for the ministry. But I was awfully deceived. There arose soon after in my mind many doubts of the authenticity of the Scriptures. Wherever I went, or whatever I was doing, these doubts haunted me. I found that I could not, I dared not pray. At first I repulsed these suggestions with horror, but they gradually laid so fast hold of me, that they destroyed all my peace. When engaged in my studies, that which was often ascribed to idleness, was really occasioned by the state of my mind, which was so perplexed that I could not attend to other things; even my pleasures were damped by uneasiness. I have no doubt that if I had been in some situations, I should have become a determined infidel. I tremble, dear papa, while I write thus; and when I look back and

think of my situation at that time, I cannot feel sufficiently thankful that my life was spared, and that I was not cut off from God for ever. I found that I had trusted in my own strength, that I had neglected prayer, and while I continued in that neglect, I could not reasonably expect the removal of these distressing searchings of heart. It was with some difficulty I could bring myself on my knees again. I was fearful that God would not hear me. But I read the Bible for encouragement, and I found it there. By continual prayer I was directed to the means of relief, and I have not been troubled with one more doubt since that time. Indeed, I cannot but believe that the death of our poor little Atherton was blest to me. It affected me more than any conversation or other event, and more than any one knew; I have never lost the impression.

"Yet I cannot feel comfortable in becoming a minister of Christ in my present state of mind. My conscience would be uneasy, if I presumed to fill an office, whose functions are so far above my ability or piety; but I earn-

estly pray that God may give me such a measure of his grace, as may in some degree fit me to become an unworthy, but *true* servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Having now freely and confidently told you what has been passing in my mind, I lie in your hands, and trust that you will pardon any error of expression or sentiment which may appear in my letter, and that you will correct whatever you see wrong in me. Receive, my dear papa, my confidence, as the strongest mark of affection and gratitude which can be given by your affectionate, but unworthy son, WILBERFORCE."

## CHAPTER II.

During the two succeeding years, we have no incidents to record. He continued his studies under able and pious instructors, and appeared to make progress in true religion. In 1823, when he was sixteen, he thus wrote to his father who was absent on a journey to Scotland.

"* * * * I have thought and considered a great deal on the contents of your last letter; I read it, I assure you, with many tears, but they were tears of love to you, and of sorrow that I fell so far short of your wishes and reasonable expectations. You say you wish me first to be a true Christian, and then a true minister; believe me, when I say, that though it is the first, the nearest, and the dearest wish of my heart, I would not have a desire, not the slightest desire of entering the Church in an unfit state of mind. I would rather engage in the meanest occupation of

life, than be a disgrace to the religion of Christ, by entering into the holy profession while I am unfit for it. When I look at the apostles of old, and mark how full they were of love to Christ and their fellow-creatures; or when I look to good men of our own day who tread in their steps, I shrink from assuming a profession for which I cannot but know myself most unworthy. I am conscious of being a great sinner, and I seem to myself utterly incompetent to be more than an humble disciple in the Church of God. But I know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and his Spirit can enable me, sinful as I am, to love and serve him. I have much to be thankful for. I ought to be thankful that I am permitted to think about these things. At times I have felt very happy in prayer and reading the Scriptures. My joy has been such, that I seemed ready not only to love God, but give up all the world for his sake; then again the cares and pleasures of life have laid hold of me, and sunk me into sorrow.

"Pray for me, my dear father, that my wavering mind may be fixed in the paths of truth,

and may choose that better part, which when once obtained, shall never be taken away from me; and may God direct me to that profession of life, in which I may most promote his glory, and my own good, and that of my fellow-creatures."

In the spring of 1824, when he had reached his seventeenth year, his friends were first alarmed for his health. He took cold from a wet ride, and a slight cough succeeded. One morning in the month of May, his father discovered symptoms of his having ruptured a blood-vessel. His fears were greatly awakened, as appears from a note in his papers. "As I looked on him that morning, I felt a shock which seemed to shatter me to the very soul, and I have never recovered it." In a short time, Wilberforce's appearance was considerably altered, and his spirits were depressed.

It was deemed expedient that he should visit Scotland, and be committed to the care of the Rev. James Marshall, his brother-in-law. It was hoped that the effects of a sea voyage, and change of air, and the benefit of Dr. S.'s advice, who, it was thought, had been remarka-

bly successful in several instances of consumption, might possibly arrest the progress of this insidious disorder.

It was impossible for his father, at that time, to accompany him. What were his feelings in prospect of separation, will appear from the following letter to Mrs. Richmond.

*St. Neot's, Monday night.*

"MY EVER DEAR LOVE,

"* * * No one knows, or ever can know, the anxiety which I have felt on our dear child's account. Little as it may have been perceived, I have been inwardly agitated beyond expression, and this must apologize for any weakness or inconsistency of which I have been guilty. God only knows what I have suffered. I have been taken by surprise. The alarming symptoms in the disease of our beloved child, have awakened a thousand feelings and fears. I have reflected on his bodily, but much more acutely on his spiritual estate. I have been unwilling to separate from him under all the probable, or at least possible contingencies of the disorder. I have wept and trembled. I have mourned over my

past deficiencies towards him. I have had my hopes, not being ignorant of the exercises of his mind for years past. Yet I have had my fears, lest he should have fallen from his first love, and lest his literary pursuits should have weaned his heart from God. For more than a year past, I have hourly meditated on the course of his education and preparation for the sacred ministry. He has been the star of my hopes, the source of my anxieties. I have anticipated with exquisite, though unuttered joy and hope, his entrance on the glorious work of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and I have also been full of anxiety in a view of the falls and disappointments which yearly occur amidst the contaminations and injurious companionship of a college career. Yet I have never ceased to hope that God will work with him and by him. My declining years have been cheered by associations connected with my interesting boy; but the Lord now sees good,—and blessed be his name,—to hang a dark curtain between me and all these thoughts and visions. Hence I am sometimes fearful, sad, and heavy.

"I see fully the necessity and propriety of the proposed journey, but I doubt his strength and ability to encounter the fatigue and trial inseparable from it. Chiefly I dread being absent from him when heart and strength may fail, and I may only see him again sinking into the grave, unaided, unstrengthened, unblessed by his affectionate father. Did I but know more of his mind, I might possibly be more at ease; but his reserve withholds from me this consolation. I have made a gentle, and I hope a considerate attempt to draw him out by a little opening discussion of the sacrament. I start for Cambridge at half-past four to-morrow. The sight of that place will most acutely remind me of the past as it relates to myself, connected with the contingencies of the future as it may concern him. I have many fears mingled with the hope of his recovery. I feel very anxious from day to day. May God overrule all these things for the good of each of us. Give my love to all, and an especial blessing to Willy.

Your affectionate

L. R."

It was determined to send him to Scotland by a sea voyage, in company with Mr. ———. His father was to follow him in a few days. He was much depressed at this time. It was his first separation from the paternal roof, and his mind became deeply affected when the parting hour arrived, and when he was to bid farewell to his beloved mother, to brothers and sisters, to domestics and neighbours, endeared to him by every sweet and tender tie of youthful affection; to the home of his infancy; to almost every person, place, and thing, with which he had been accustomed to associate happiness; the agitations of his feelings increased the weakness of his frame; the conflict of his mind was visible in his countenance, he looked pale and languid; a painful contrast to the usual smile which played on his countenance. On the morning of his departure he was very silent. He looked on all his friends as they stood around him, and with tears in his eyes he stepped into the carriage.

During the interval of separation, his father corresponded with him, and was very earnest to draw from him a more unreserved commu-

nication, and to satisfy himself more thoroughly of Wilberforce's piety, of which he entertained some doubts, amidst many hopes. The following is Wilberforce's answer to a letter pressing on his attention the important subject of the Lord's Supper.

"My dear Father,

"I thank you for the kind letter you wrote to me on the subject of the Sacrament. I could not have received one which would have more truly convinced me of your affection and desire for my spiritual welfare. Oh! may God give an answer to your prayers and desires on my behalf, and may you see me walking humbly and sincerely in that narrow path which leads to life eternal. I have thought much on the contents of your letter, and have been deeply affected. At first I was discouraged by a sense of unworthiness, and shrunk from the thought of approaching the Lord's table. It then struck me, that even if I had not attained all I desired, I might still venture with a humble and prayerful spirit, and an entire dependence on Christ. I thought, also, if I neglected attendance, I should be

dishonouring the Saviour by a refusal of an appointed means of grace; and I do hope that by presenting myself to Christ in his own ordinance, I may be confirmed and strengthened in my faith, and helped on to fulfil the vows made at my baptism, and fight manfully under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil. I would, then, my dear father, put on the garb of humility, and go and kneel, as the very lowest of his disciples, at the foot of the cross of Jesus, and commemorate with gratitude his cross and passion, his glorious resurrection and ascension,—on the merit of which alone are fixed all my hopes in this world and the next. How thankful do I feel that I *may* kneel at the foot of the cross. Oh! where besides could I wish to stretch out my aching limbs and die.

"I suppose my journey will make some delay in your intentions, but if I return with renewed health and strength, I would consider that in receiving the Sacrament, I give a pledge to God and you, to devote myself, soul and body, to the promotion of the divine glory. But if I should not return in health, and if it

should seem fit to the Almighty to shorten my life, yet if he will renew my soul by his Holy Spirit, oh! how unspeakable a blessing to wing my flight from sin and sorrow.

"If I were certain of his favour, and my own change of heart, I should only wish to see my Saviour face to face, and praise and love him for ever. I have written hastily, but as long as I could without fatigue, a short, but I assure you a sincere letter.

Your affectionate

WILBERFORCE."

In the course of a fortnight, his father and sister followed him into Scotland. They met him as they entered the Frith of Clyde, in a steamboat. He looked much better; his spirits were good, and the meeting between them inspired reciprocal feelings of hope and joy.

Mr. Richmond took a small cottage at Rothsay, in the Isle of Bute, at a convenient distance from his physician's residence. From hence he made frequent excursions by sea and land, and used every means for the recovery of his beloved son. For a while his health seemed to be improved, but it soon appeared

that there was no material amendment. For a few weeks he was buoyant in spirit, and apparently restored, then the hectic fever flushed his cheek, he grew weaker, and again sunk into depression.

His father was greatly depressed about the spiritual state of his child—the more so, because he shrank from all personal conversation on religious subjects, though his thoughtful, and often depressed countenance, exhibited traces of inward conflict, and need of help and comfort. He afterwards deeply regretted his silence, and said, "It was a device of Satan to retard my progress in vital experimental piety."

## CHAPTER III.

The following chapter is from the pen of Wilberforce's sister.

I do not think Willy was fully aware of his danger at this time, though from his reserve it was difficult to ascertain his opinion of himself; and his physician was afraid of discouraging him by a disclosure of his real situation, as he considered it of importance that he should expect recovery, and cultivate cheerfulness of temper.

Willy wrote a few letters during his residence at Rothsay, of which the following are specimens:

"DEAR ——,

"I am not inattentive or indifferent to the kind solicitude you have expressed for me. I now experience what I have only heard before, that nothing is more consolatory in sickness than to be remembered by those we loved

in health. I have been very unwell since I saw you, and I once thought I must have given up my former enjoyments, my future hopes and prospects, even the pleasure of seeing dear friends such as you, ——, and all I held most dear on earth. I shall never forget the pang which almost broke my heart at leaving home, when I saw the tops of the houses, and the Church, and the fields, and the trees of my native village, disappear from my sight. I thought, perhaps I am looking for the last time on the scene of my earliest recollections —my fondest and dearest enjoyments—but it was a moment of weakness, and I fear it was mingled with a feeling of repining. I had always been happy—too happy, my heart was satisfied with this world, but God was leading me by a path I knew not, in which I should find more certain and durable enjoyment. I needed something to convince me of the emptiness of the world, and to lead me to fix my affections higher. I am *now* much better in health. I do not look like the same person, and I hope I am not presumptuous in anticipating another day with you as happy as that

spent at W —— a few months ago. Perhaps you will think it a common-place remark, if I express a wish for your company at Rothsay. The situation is beautiful, but beautiful as is the sea stretched now before us, and the mountains and little romantic islands which surround us on all sides, need I say how much more I should enjoy their beauty, were you here to enjoy it with us? I am glad to have dear —— with me. We share our joys together, and think so much alike about every thing. To have been translated so suddenly as I have been, from our flat country to this mountainous region, seems like being taken to fairy land. Neither description nor imagination can do justice to Scottish scenery; but do not suppose that amidst all its charms I have forgotten England. Oh no! I more than ever love the little blue hills of my native country; the fertile plains, grassy meadows, waving valleys, and elegant rusticity of the cottages, in which we so much excel the hovels of Caledonia. We have here fine exhilarating mountain air, but the nights are cold and bleak. I long to enjoy again an English

summer evening—to recline as I have often done on a bank warmed by the setting sun, to feel the balmy breeze which wafts the fragrance of the flowers—to listen to the warbling strain of the nightingale, and give way to the wanderings of my imagination, which gave perhaps a delusive yet fascinating sensation of pleasure to the fleeting moment.

"I have sailed above a thousand miles on the sea. I am beginning to like boisterous weather, though I seldom escape the consequences. Adieu.

Yours, sincerely,

WILBERFORCE."

About this time my father began to prepare Wilberforce to receive the holy sacrament for the first time, and they used to retire together every day after breakfast during our stay at Rothsay. Willy listened to instruction with respectful silence, and seeming acquiescence in the sentiments laid before him: he appeared interested and anxious to be received into full communion with the Church of God, and was often observed to be in deep

thought, and sometimes greatly depressed. His unwillingness, however, to free communication rather increased, and as his health was not materially improved, his father's anxiety often amounted to agony, and he could not conceal the mental agitation which afflicted him. He continued to weep and pray in secret for his child's confidence. From Wilberforce's conversations at a later period, and from letters written about this time, unknown to his father till after his decease, we learnt what had been the deep exercises of his mind—that he was then earnestly seeking the knowledge and enjoyment of God—that eternal things were daily subjects of his contemplation and inquiry, and that he also suffered much from an insurmountable repugnance to make known his feelings, his wishes, and wants. He told us afterwards, that though he suffered more from suffering alone, he seemed like one bound with a chain, and could not venture to lean or place his confidence on any human help. At this time he wrote as follows :

"*Rothsay.*

"My dear Mamma,

"I was beginning to write to you when your letter arrived. Very many thanks to you for it. It is impossible for me to say how much a letter from home rejoices and relieves me, under the peculiar circumstances by which I am separated from it. The simplest thing which happens in Turvey, becomes to me an object of interest.

"I am very sorry I should be the cause of anxiety to you or to any one I love. I feel this thought more than any pain I suffer in my body. Indeed I lament our separation as much as you can do. This period is one in which I could have wished we might all have been together, but things do not fall out as we would have them, and it is best for us that they do not. I wish to feel resignation in every thing. As for my illness, I trust I receive it at the hands of God, and most firmly believe it to be the greatest mercy he ever vouchsafed me. My heart was engrossed by this world. My affections were not set on things above. I did not sufficiently feel my

need of a Saviour. Christ was not my beacon-star to direct the future wanderings of my life, but I looked to the false glare of human ambition, which would have led me to serve myself rather than God; now I have discovered the worthlessness of all my hopes and aims. I find that all I have hitherto done is of no avail in sickness. I have seen what earthly dependance is—when the world and all that is in it seems about to be hidden from our view for ever. I trust also I have known something of the joy arising out of dependance on Christ in the moment of extremity. I would ask God's forgiveness for making less improvement of his "loving reproof" than I ought to have done. Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. G—. I hope the school is going on prosperously. I wish my class to be told, that though far from them, I have not forgotten them. I hope they are regular in their attendance, and that if I return, I shall find them all much improved. Oh! if you knew how very often I think of home. I did not know till now how much I was attached to Turvey. I shall never forget my feelings

when I lost sight of our little village. I was obliged to summon up every weak and weary faculty to prevent my quite sinking under the removal from it. * * *

Your most affectionate and dutiful Son,

WILBERFORCE."

*Rothsay, September.*

MY DEAR MAMMA,

"Many thanks for your affectionate birth-day letter. I shall always recollect my last birth-day, for it was the first in which I felt melancholy. In the full enjoyment of health and spirits, surrounded by all I most loved, and by the companions of my boyhood, those days were wont to pass away more quickly and happily than any other. But as I sailed pensively down the waters of Loch-lomond on the 20th of last month—a day dark and gloomy, and in unison with my feelings—I felt that I was no longer in the spot where I had spent the former anniversaries with those who shared and welcomed my happiness. Yet I solaced the desolation of feeling with the recollection, that though absent, there were those who were

thinking of me, and of this your letter convinced me. * * * * We spent last Sunday at Greenock; a day, I trust, ever to be remembered by me, for on that day I was admitted to the highest Christian privilege, the sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, ordained by him as a perpetual remembrance of his precious death and passion. Oh! that it may be to me a sign and pledge of my admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb in glory. I was very much affected, and should have been quite overcome by the emotions of my own mind, if I had not felt stronger and better than usual on that day. Now that I am an outward member of the visible Church of Christ, may I daily prove myself to be one inwardly, in spirit and in truth; and whatever portion of life God is pleased to allow me, I would devote it to his service, and love him with my whole heart, who first loved me. I wish another summer was at hand, instead of another winter. I feel a dread of the winter. There is already an autumnal feeling here. The leaves are beginning to change their lively

green to more varied hues. Did the fading leaf ever remind you of the decay of a Christian in this world? Like the early tints displayed by the unfolding bud, are the opening dispositions of a young Christian. His active walk and conversation resemble the healthy vigor of the full matured foliage and fruit. In the signs of withering decay we see an emblem of his closing scene, when he has arrived at the end of his mortal existence, and sinks into a temporary suspension, to shoot forth in a never-fading spring of immortal joys."

We spent the months of July, August, and September, in the Isle of Bute, but as the season advanced, we were advised to return home. Apparently, there was little improvement in Wilberforce's health. Probably from being constantly with him, we had not noticed the gradual, yet real increase of the disorder. He certainly considered himself much better, and entertained hopes of recovery, and expressed great pleasure in returning to Turvey. We passed a few days on our way home, with some dear friends in Yorkshire, with whom

our father left us while he went to preach at Bradford.

My brother arrived at Turvey Rectory the beginning of November, and was restored to the quiet and peace of his own family. Six weeks elapsed with little or no alteration in his appearance. In a letter which my father wrote to me at this time, he says,

"Dear Willy is much the same. I wish he was more confidential and communicative as to the real state of his soul. Oh! what would I give for one *voluntary* conversation or letter, detailing the former and present history of what is passing in his mind. I think well of it, and I hope it is comfortable; but I want to know this from himself. Many a secret tear does his silence cost me."

It was during the six months following his return from Scotland, that poor Willy's soul was so severely tried. He never spoke of death, but he must have been sensible of increasing inward decay. He could not hide from himself or his family, the depression and anxiety of his spirit. He was much alone, and when he returned from his closet to his

family, the signs of sorrow and the traces of some deep mental conflict were frequently visible in his countenance. The Bible was scarcely ever out of his hand, and after his return from the north, he seldom took up any other book, religious or literary; which was the more remarkable, as his chief occupation and delight had ever been in reading authors on almost all subjects. He would now sit for hours, and nearly whole days over the Bible, in deep abstraction; he was still silent to all about him, and it was sometimes more than my dear father could bear, to witness the increasing uneasiness of his mind, and the sufferings of his body. After so many ineffectual efforts to penetrate the real state of his heart, our afflicted parent had but one resource—to commit his child to God, in faith, and under the pressure of his agonized feelings to cry, "thou hast wounded and wilt heal; hast broken and wilt bind up again." The following letters were, I believe, the last my brother wrote:

DEAR ——,

"I am afraid that you will conclude that our trip to the north has cooled our affections, and frozen them into indifference to former friendships. You must think so no longer.

* * * * * *

"I am now in that dear home which has sometimes been rendered still dearer by your presence. I reflect on those hours with much pleasure, but the remembrance is mingled with a feeling of melancholy. It is possible they may return; I mean hours of the same delight: yet I must not forget my gradual decline for the last six months. I am now in a state in which a slight increase of disease might prove fatal; but I am hoping, always hoping; for hope is a symptom of my disorder, so I must hope. I am no longer what you once knew me. The glow of health and spirits does not now enliven my countenance, which looks, I believe, rather sad; yet I know not why it should do so, for I have lost only that which endureth for a moment, and if I obtain that which endureth for ever, the love and mercy of Christ, surely I have reason to

rejoice in the exchange. In Christ, and Christ alone I find peace.—He will not cast me away. I have thrown myself, as an unworthy sinner, at the foot of the cross, and there in peace will I lay my head, and I trust, cheerfully resign my breath to him who gave it. I used once to love the rose of all the flowers the best; but now it has left me, and I turn to the lilly, for it seems to betoken my approach to a world of purity—nor have I any wish for life, if Christ will receive one so unworthy. From how much sin and temptation shall I make my escape by an early death, and quitting these, enter into a heaven of joy where there is no more curse. I know that in very faithfulness God has afflicted me; my chief sins were pride and ambition, and these have been the very means, at least the chief cause of my disease. Proud of my talents, and seeking the admiration of men, I neglected my health till it was too late to correct the error, and now my dream of future happiness in this world and all my ambitious hopes are fled. But I would not exchange the humility of a Christian for the phantom at which I

formerly grasped. People tell me I shall recover. There may be hope, but my own impression is to the contrary. Pray for me, dear ——, and let a tear fall for the sins of

Your affectionate

WILBERFORCE."

*January* 4, 1825.

"Many, many thanks, dear Mamma, for your long and kind letter. I know you love me, and think of me while you are absent; and it is some little consolation for your absence, and yet but little, for I long for your return, very, very much. The house is dull without you, and I am dull; for I am deprived of the society of one I hold most dear. Do come as soon as circumstances will permit. I would not press it, mamma, but I am not near so well as when you left me. My spirits are weak, and my appetite almost gone.

* * * * *

I am glad that you wrote to me so openly and candidly on the subject of death. I feel my earthly tabernacle fast wearing away, and every day brings more occasion for solemn

thought and serious reflection ; and now, dear mamma, having said this, I know you will be very anxious to hear something about the state of my mind. Just now it is most unhappy. The thought has forced itself upon me, that I am not a child of God, but have been deceiving myself with false hopes. My breast heaving with anguish, and my eyes swollen with tears too big to find a passage, would bear witness to the agony of spirit I have endured this day. But I have cast myself at the feet of my heavenly Father, and have implored him by his mercy, by the love which led him to send a Saviour into the world, by the death and intercession of that Saviour, by the encouragements he has held out to sinners to come unto him, and by the help which he has promised to all those who do so come—I have implored him not to send me empty away. I have not yet found comfort, but I am looking and trusting. He has said, Whom I love I chasten. I do hope this may be his dealing with me, and if so, I shall be thankful for it. Amidst these conflicts, I see as it were, a light glimmering through the darkness, which leads me

on in hope. Oh! mamma, if you love your son, join your prayers to his, that this life, this ray of hope may increase, and that he may have a sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. I thank you for Miss Jerram's Memoir. I never read any book with more interest. She had exactly the same feelings I have, but God removed them in his own good time; and I derive a hope from her deliverance, that I shall not be cast away. I will not think it. I should deny his word—his promises. Sorrow not, mamma, that I must leave you, we shall not be long separated. Two little ones are gone before me, and will you not rejoice that God has been so gracious to them? They knew not the sin and sorrow of the world. I have known both, and I wish to encounter no more. Not one prayer have I offered up for life; but I have said, Lord, give me a converted heart, and do with my life as seemeth thee best. I feel no desire for life. Do not think I want affection. The thought of parting with you all, is more than I can well bear, but God will give me strength.

"You blame yourself for not having talked with me on religious subjects. I am sorry to say you would have found in me a backwardness which I was never able to overcome, but now if you were here I could talk most confidentially with you. * * * May the spirit of God rest upon you. May he comfort you under present anxiety—May he speak to your heart in future sorrows—May you find joy in all your tribulations, and an earnest of that rest which is prepared for the people of God. I am,

Your affectionate

WILBERFORCE."

The last letter my brother attempted was to Mr. ——, in Scotland. It was written under great debility, and was left very unfinished.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Forgive me if I write this letter in a very disjointed style. I cannot write long together, and it is difficult to resume thoughts once broken in their connexion. Many thanks for your kind letter. You need not have begun with excuses. You make me anxious to have you

with me—I want to unburden my heart to you. I wish to hear a voice of comfort from you. I never could speak freely on these subjects —I am sorry you found me so backward to religious conversation, but I could not surmount my repugnance—I found it impossible —I was not near enough to death—I had not known trials and conflicts enough to overcome my reserve, and induce me to unbosom my thoughts and feelings. But now that I am struggling for life, now that I have experienced hours of mental agony, which might often have been alleviated could I have opened my heart, how much do I long to have you near me. How confidently, how freely would I now converse with you."

Hitherto Willy's decline had been so gradual, as scarcely to be observed by those who were constantly about him. He rode on horseback daily, sat much with my father in the study, and appeared to his family nearly as usual, except that an increased anxiety was visible in his countenance. But early in January, 1825, a considerable alteration was apparent. He wasted rapidly—death was evi-

dently approaching. We were taken by surprise, for our fears had been lulled asleep. My dear father wrote as follows,

"My dearest F.

"As I think more uncertainty hangs over the day of your arrival than I wish, I write to hasten your return. Dear Willy droops, he declines fast. He misses you much, and often says he wants you. Many symptoms increase my anxiety about him. He is much weaker within the last few days. Come to us immediately. We want another nurse. His breathing is with difficulty and pain. His sleep and appetite fail—his looks are pale and wan—his whole frame is sinking—his mind seems very calm and composed, but he still says nothing. I am persuaded that a great deal more has passed within than we know of, and that of an excellent kind. Peace and grace be with him and you, and with

Your affectionate father,

L. R.

"P. S.—Since I wrote the above, I have had a very long, free, unreserved conversation

with our dear boy, most affectionate and affecting, and close to the great point. It is an immense relief to my mind. He is to me an interesting mixture of anxiety and hope. His language sometimes resembles that of your own letter; at other times he can trust more. Oh! that I might see both my beloved children, yea, all of them, living by faith on the Son of God. By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

"Willy's most distressing symptom is a kind of suffocating feeling. We know not what this may produce. You will not be surprised at my distress. Do not wait for an escort, but trust Providence for a safe journey home."

(Tuesday.)

"You will be anxious to hear how the dear boy is to-day. He is extremely ill in body, and exceedingly well in mind—in a peculiarly holy frame. He slept a little in the armchair last night, but his decay is rapid. He wishes to talk with you on many subjects. I hope he may have strength at intervals to do

so. His conversations with me have been most valuable and interesting: praised be God! I am so comforted by my dear boy's unreserved communications, that I frequently forget the pain of parting. Who could be so selfish as to wish to stop his journey to heaven. Yet how trying to nature is the idea of parting with him. Well, under every bereavement and separation from others, forget not, my dear F——, the use you may always make of your father who loves you. You also have been too reserved towards him, for he is indeed and indeed,

Your own affectionate parent,

L. R."

My mother was still at B——, to which place she had been summoned to attend the dying bed of her own parent, and my father wrote to beg her return.

"My dear love,

"Our dear Willy's weakness has increased with such unexpected rapidity within the last three days, that I wish you to return home immediately. He is exceedingly anxious that you should not delay an hour in coming

to him. Amidst my great anxieties, I have the pleasure of telling you that the spell of silence is happily broken between us, and he has opened his whole heart to me. He is in a very anxious but hopeful frame of mind. By our mutual conversation of yesterday and to-day I am relieved from a heavy burden. All the nameless pangs of my mind, during the last eight months, have been almost blotted out of my remembrance by my present consolations. My prayers are answered at last, the door of utterance is opened, and I am truly thankful. Your mind as well as mine has long anticipated the probable result of this sickness. We must go to the strong hold for help, and we shall not fail to find it. I am staying from Church to enjoy a Sabbath with our dear boy; he has had a very bad night, chiefly in the arm-chair; the fever has been excessively high, and the pulse at the utmost. But take comfort from the state of his mind. It is truly interesting. All its natural superiority mingles with its spiritual characteristics. He that once comforted you in your own dangerous sickness will comfort you in the dis-

tress of your soul. Let us trust God in overruling all for the best. When not oppressed by debility and pain, Willy's countenance beams with sweet smiles of composure and love. He often inquires when you may be expected. * * Of my other feelings I can say but little. No one but God knows all that has passed in my heart for more than eight months, I may say years, concerning Wilberforce, but God is good and gracious.

Most affectionately yours,

L. R."

All reserve was now banished from my brother's mind. He opened his whole heart to his father, told him minutely of all his past conflicts, spoke of his present comforts, and begged that he might be closely examined. He wished to satisfy his parent and pastor that his faith was scriptural and sincere. He seemed to go beyond his strength in conversing—even to extreme exhaustion, and appeared very anxious to tell how God had enlightened, converted, strengthened and comforted him. He would sit for hours with his dear father in the study, supported in an easy

chair, telling him all he had gone through—entreating his pardon for the uneasiness he had occasioned him by his past silence, and expressing his great joy at now being able to converse with freedom, and mingle their souls together in the delightful interchange of confidence. It was now that our beloved father was indeed comforted, and that he received a full answer to patient prayer. Edified, refreshed, and soothed by the holy language of his child, his mind was supported under the expected and long dreaded pang of parting. These conversations, which were continued until increasing weakness rendered them impossible, induced my father to form the resolution of writing a memoir of Wilberforce, the imperfect outline of which is all that is left to us. I have often heard my father and brother give the same opinion of the reserve which occasioned so much pain on both sides, and to which frequent allusion has been made. They considered it as God's way of dealing with a peculiar state of mind—intended to humble the pride of the understanding, and silence a love of argument. It was the Holy

Spirit, as a sovereign, converting without human agency. Wilberforce said, that for more than three months, he had never looked into any book but the Bible; that God's word had been his only study, and that amidst all his anxiety, often amounting to agony of mind, he could find no relief, either from religious books or religious conversation; but was obliged to go to the Bible for every thing he wanted to know:—that whenever he opened the Bible, he turned verse after verse into prayer as he read, and that in so doing he felt a force, a sweetness and consolation passing all understanding—that though he knew he had a father who loved him tenderly, and was so able and willing to instruct him and remove his perplexities, he felt himself as one who was spell-bound, and could not break silence—and so he retired to his solitary chamber to weep and struggle on in darkness—until the Holy Spirit became his teacher, showing him the piercing spirituality of a perfect law; amidst conviction and terror of conscience, leading him to the cross to seek for mercy through him that was crucified upon

it; and enabling him to receive the promises of free salvation in Christ by his blood and righteousness unto justification. I have built, he would say, all my hopes for eternity on God's word, which is unerring truth. I have found peace there, and have been sealed by the Spirit which indited that word, an earnest of the heavenly inheritance. It was without human aid, that I might give God the glory.

## CHAPTER IV.

This chapter is from the pen of Mr. Richmond.

On Saturday he expressed a wish to see our family surgeon; "not," said he, "that I want medicine, which will do me no good, but I wish for his opinion of the progress of the disorder; it will be a great satisfaction to me to know precisely, how long he thinks I may live. My strength fails, yet the symptoms vary very much." The surgeon arrived in the evening. Willy conversed freely with him, and begged him to be open and explicit. Mr. —— saw clearly that he was now in the last stage of consumption, and he was surprised at the cheerful and unembarrassed manner with which he discoursed on his present situation. I left them together for a few minutes. On my re-entering the room, I was struck with his countenance, which presented a mixture

of calm and lively satisfaction, as he was conversing with his medical attendant, who on his return to the family spoke with great feeling of his patient. He said, "the danger is imminent, though it is impossible to say how long he may remain," and added, "I have scarcely ever witnessed so much cheerfulness and composure in any one in the prospect of death; certainly never in so young a person."

* * * * * *

I returned to my son, who said that Mr. —'s visit had afforded much relief to his feelings. "I see what he thinks of my case, and it was right I should know it." There was a union of thoughtfulness and serenity in his manner which affected me exceedingly, but it filled me with gratitude and thankfulness to witness in this well-ordered and calm state of mind, an evidence of God's work, and of a divine change. He observed, "I have no expectation of any advantage from medicine, but it may palliate distressing symptoms. The great Physician alone will regulate all for the best, both for body and soul. Oh! I want to *trust him* more and more!"

In the evening, as we were sitting alone in the study, I asked him whether he had read the book I had put into his hands, and whether he had found its contents satisfactory. Instead of giving any direct reply to this question, he looked at me with an earnest expression of countenance, and said, "Papa, do not be afraid; I wish you to examine me. I am anxious neither to deceive, nor be deceived in respect to my spiritual estate. You cannot be too plain with me." I had been for a long time past earnestly longing for a full disclosure of his thoughts, but his reserve had hitherto kept me from all knowledge of his real state. In answer to questions of a personal nature, he would only reply, "I hardly know what to say; another time I may tell better." On religious subjects in general he never refused to converse freely, but he shrunk from every attempt at personal application. I was therefore delighted when he thus voluntarily afforded me an opportunity of knowing the secret state of his mind, for which I had long and most anxiously prayed. I told him how much I had wished to gain his confidence,

and feared I had not urged him to freedom of intercourse with sufficient earnestness. "Indeed, papa," he said, "the fault was not yours. I have felt a backwardness, particularly of late, to disclose what was passing in my mind, and had you pressed me more than you have done, to speak of myself, I believe you would have failed to have obtained your object. But now I feel quite at liberty to talk of myself; and I first tell you that I think I see God's design in keeping me thus shut up from you. It was his gracious purpose to teach me, in the privacy and solitude of inward meditation, my state as a sinner, and the nature of salvation by a Saviour; here I learnt the deep things of God, and now I would come forth and tell you what Christ has done for my soul." His countenance brightened as he uttered these words; a tear dropped from his cheek, and his eye glistened with animation, as he said, "I have had great exercises of mind of late, but God has been very merciful to me in the midst of them."

"And what," said I, "are your present feelings, my dear boy?" "I feel, papa," he

replied, "more hope than joy. I have read of ecstacies in the view of dying, which others have experienced, and to which I am still a stranger; but I have a hope founded on the word of God, which cheers and supports me. I know in whom I have trusted, and I believe he will neither leave nor forsake me. I am not afraid of death; but as I think my time will not be long, I wish to put myself first into the Lord's hand, and then into yours, that you may search and try me, whether I am in any error." Such an important moment was not to be neglected. I received my child's confidence as an answer to many an anxious and earnest prayer which I had offered up to God, and I resolved to use it, as affording an opportunity of peculiar interest to us both. Satisfied as I had long been with the general view of his religious and moral character, strengthened by a discovery of many evidences of inward principle, still, when I considered the near approach of death and eternity—the value of an immortal soul—the danger of spiritual delusion, and my own immeasurable responsibility as a parent, I resolved to leave nothing unsaid or untried,

which would bring our hearts into mutual repose on the great subject of salvation, and my dear child's personal interest therein.

I found his mind perfectly clear as to the great principle of his acceptance with God, solely and unequivocally through the death and righteousness of Christ. In the most simple and satisfactory manner he renounced all dependance upon every word and deed of his own. "It is, said he, as a guilty sinner before God, that I throw myself on his mercy. I have no excuse to offer for myself, no plea to put in why God should not utterly destroy me, but that Jesus died to save, to pardon, and to bless me. It is his free gift, and not my deserving. Oh! papa, what would become of me if salvation was by works? What have I ever done, and above all, what in my present state could I now do, to *merit* any thing at his hands? God forbid that I should rest on such a flimsy, fallacious system of divinity, as that which ascribes merit to man. I have no merit. I can have none. I have long known this. I fear many trust in themselves, and thus rob Christ of his glory. Is not this true papa?

"Yes, my dear Wilberforce, many do deceive themselves, and build for eternity on a wrong foundation. But I have endeavoured to impress on your mind from your childhood, that salvation by grace, and not of works, is the peculiar feature of the Gospel of Christ; and do you not now see that this is the doctrine of the Bible?

"Yes, papa, and it is because, after long and repeated study of the Bible, I have found the doctrine there, that I believe, and am now comforted by it. You will pardon my saying that the opinions which I have formed, and the doctrines on which I rest, have not been imbibed from the sermons I have heard, or the books which I have read, but from a close study of the Scriptures themselves. I have been accustomed to bring sermons and books to the test of the Bible, and not the Bible to them. You cannot think what light and comfort I have found in reading God's own word. I never found any thing like it from any other book."

I particularly inquired into the history of

his mind for more than three years past, in reference to those sceptical temptations which he had formerly described to me; and whether he had been lately tried by the same doubts and difficulties in respect of the truth of the Scriptures." "Never," replied he; "no, never. From the time to which you allude, I have felt the most perfect reliance on the word of God; and by much reading of it, and praying over it, I have been so confirmed in my persuasion of its divine origin, as not to have had my confidence once shaken since that period. I have been tried deeply in other respects, but I have never again varied on that important question. The book of God, by God's blessing on its contents, has proved its own heavenly character to my understanding. How thankful I feel for this!"——

A flush of hectic fever occasioned at this moment a short period of debility, and he paused for a few minutes. He soon resumed his affecting conversation, and said, "I am not ignorant of my besetting sin. It was the pride of the understanding. I always loved to examine thoroughly into the ground of

an opinion before I received it, and generally, though not always, to be deliberate in coming to a conclusion. This habit has often made me appear over-confident in what I said, and I know you have felt and lamented it. I do entreat your forgiveness of any instance of my folly which has hurt and grieved you." Then he added, "The recollection of it has greatly humbled me; I trust I have seen my fault, and have not applied in vain to the blood which cleanseth from all sin."

I asked him what had been his views of the ministry in case God had spared his life. He replied, "You know, papa, it has always been my wish and expectation to be a clergyman, and with this view I have sought to attain various kinds of literary knowledge. I have very often prayed to God to fit me for this office, and I have thought much of the doctrines I should have to preach to others. But I can see a reason why God has put an end to these intentions and prospects. He is removing me out of this life, and does not permit me to enter into the ministry, lest I should be tempted, from the peculiar turn of my mind, to

seek the honour and praise of men in my ministrations, more than God's glory, and the salvation of sinners. I think I can see both wisdom and goodness in this dispensation."

I remarked that the same God who had convinced him of his danger, could have humbled his heart in a variety of ways, and prepared him for the service of the sanctuary, without endangering his safety; and doubtless would have done it if he had seen good to have prolonged his life. "Such discoveries of your own heart, my dear boy, are evidences not only of what God can do, but a pledge of what he would have done for you." "True, papa, but if he is pleased to humble me in the valley of death, may it not be safer and happier for me? The Lord's way must be the best way."

He then adverted to another subject. "I have been much occupied of late," said he, "in thinking of man's natural depravity, and the deceitfulness of the human heart. I have discovered it in many things in which we are apt to overlook or make excuses for it. I am sure *I* have no ground of hope except I

stand with St. Paul, and cry out, I am the chief of sinners." I referred to a conversation which I once had with an individual, who objected to an application of that expression to himself, and said, it was intended only to describe the peculiar circumstances of St. Paul. "Then I am sure," replied Wilberforce, "that person could not have been rightly convicted of guilt in his own conscience. I do not know what the critics may say on such a passage, but I am quite satisfied that when the heart is opened to itself, the expression, *chief of sinners*, will not appear too strong to describe its character. I have often heard you say, papa, that the view of religion which most honours God, is that which most debases the sinner, and most exalts the Saviour. I never felt this to be so true as at the present moment."

His pallid but intelligent countenance as he said this, seemed to express more than he could find words to utter. He paused a while and continued, "What a comfort I find in this conversation with you! It is such a relief to my mind! and I am very thankful for it."

My own heart was too responsive to that of my beloved child, not to re-echo his own sentiments. I knelt down and returned thanks to God for the consolation afforded to us both, and prayed earnestly that he would continue to us the same holy interchange of kindred spirit and feelings.

In another conversation my dear boy expressed great satisfaction at the remembrance of the preparation for the Lord's Supper, while we resided in the Isle of Bute the preceding summer; a preparation carried on for several weeks before he first received that sacrament in the Episcopal Chapel of Greenock. He observed that in his daily opportunities of reading and conversing with me, he could seldom express his thoughts with freedom, though he deeply felt the importance of the subject before us, but "I shall always feel thankful to you, papa, for the diligent and affectionate manner in which you instructed me. I love that book of Mason's. I shall never forget that day at Greenock Chapel. I was greatly comforted. You preached from Isa. lv. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the wa-

ters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." I did indeed thirst for the waters of salvation. Poor Charlotte B—— was there also. Her unexpected death affected me much."

"What were your thoughts," I said, "when you wrote those lines in her album the night before you parted from her."*

"I thought them," he replied, "very suitable to my own feelings, but I little thought she was to realize the sentiment before I did." "She has joined her father in a better world," I said. "Yes, and may I soon be with them; but God knows best, and I wish to commit myself into his hands, for life or death." He then sunk for a while into his chair, and dozed. When he awoke he began again to converse. "But, papa, papa, do you indeed think I am on the right foundation? I

* It matters little at what hour of the day
The righteous falls asleep. Death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die;
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.

MILLMAN.

cannot bear the thought of being deceived; but I do think Christ loves me too well to cast me away, and that I may say, *Faithful is he that has promised, who also will do it.* I love God. I love his word, I love his ways. I love his people, though I feel so unworthy to be counted one of them. Surely such feelings as these do not fit me for hell." An indescribable look of animation pervaded his countenance as he uttered these words, and bespoke the love, faith, hope, and sincerity of his heart, too plainly to be mistaken.

"If," he continued, "God meant to destroy me, would he have shown me these things?"

"I am persuaded not," I answered. "Manoah's wife has proved a comforter to many, and I rejoice that her argument for the merciful designs of God prevails with you."

"I am now fatigued, and must go to bed," said he. "Pray with me, and then, good night!"

Having the assistance of a much valued friend to undertake the public services of my Church, and feeling great anxiety to avail myself of this opportunity to devote myself to my

son in his critical and alarming state of health, I remained at home with him the whole day. Although much oppressed by the rapidly increasing progress of disease and consequent debility, yet he was able to engage in some interesting and very important conversations at intervals during the day. He was carried into the study about eleven o'clock. At his breakfast he expressed a hope that there were many now engaged in prayer for him in the congregation assembled for divine service. "I should love to be in the midst of them, but it cannot be now. It never will be in this world. What a comforting consideration, papa, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, Christ has promised to be present with them. Do you not think he is here?" I replied, "I cannot doubt it, my dear boy. It is one of the most consolatory views of the word of God, not only that he is constantly present with every individual believer, in every place, and under every circumstance, but he is also especially present with all such, however great or small their number, who unite together in acts of wor-

ship and religious intercourse. He is alike present at this time with our friends in the Church, and with you and me in this room. May God give us grace to realize this and be thankful."

Soon afterwards, while the servant was removing the breakfast things, I was stirring the fire, as he complained of the cold; and a short silence ensued. He said presently, with a playful smile, "I was thinking while you stirred the fire, how much easier it is to rake the ashes from the grate than to get rid of sin from the heart;" and then relapsing into a grave look, he added, "how often the ashes of sin deaden the flame of religion in the heart." This remark—originating in an apparently casual incident—led to a close conversation on the nature of sin, and the difficulties with which a Christian has to contend in his conflicts with indwelling and inbred corruption. I was much struck with his deep acquaintance with the exercises of his own heart, and with the Gospel plan of salvation, which he evinced as he continued to dwell on this subject. I rejoiced to observe in him a

personal and practical application of the grand truths of revelation to his own heart; the result of much prayer and meditation, and reading of the sacred volume: his inmost thoughts were thrown into our discourses, which manifested a power and demonstration of the Spirit of God far beyond what I ever anticipated. The reserve which had caused me so much solicitude was entirely removed. With a sweet and endearing freedom of heart and tongue he expressed himself so openly, and with such sincerity, as filled me with gratitude, and rendered me for a moment insensible—comparatively insensible—to the pang of bereavement which was so soon to be undergone. To possess such satisfactory evidences of my child being an heir of glory, that my temporary loss would prove his eternal gain, and the hope that we should one day meet in the presence of God to part no more, cheered my spirit and tranquillized my mind, under an affliction otherwise insupportable.

I was making a reference to some expressions in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, on the nature and character of

St. Paul's own experimental acquaintance with the truths which he enforced on others, when I was summoned to join my other children at the dinner table. I told him my absence would allow him a respite from the fatigue of conversation, but that I would soon return to him and resume the subject, and begged him to seek repose for a little while in his own arm-chair. This appeared to me the more necessary, as I had observed an evident and painful struggle between the debility of his frame and the animation of his thoughts. The hour of the afternoon service arriving, I returned to my son, whom I found with the Bible opened before him. He looked at me with a smile, and said, "Well, papa, I have not been asleep. I have been otherwise employed. I revived almost as soon as you left me, and as I wanted to converse with you on the epistle to the Romans, I have been reading through the first eight chapters, whilst you were below, in order that I might have this subject more clear in my recollection." I was surprised and pleased to find that he had strength sufficient for such an exer-

tion, and I reflect on the circumstance with greater interest, as this was, I believe, the last time he was able to read at all.

He observed that he had purposely stopped at the eighth chapter, because the Apostle had there seemed to make a division in his subject and argument. "What a beautiful summary of doctrine these chapters contain, papa! I have thought on them again and again. St. Paul lays his foundation deep in the corruption of human nature, and shows so plainly that neither Jew nor Gentile has any hope from works, but only from faith in Christ Jesus. I have found great comfort from that view of the righteousness of Christ, which the Apostle declares to be the only way of salvation. There is, there can be no other. We have no righteousness of our own—all are under sin—every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. I have been at times perplexed about the principle of acceptance with God, but now I see it quite clear. With what earnestness does the Apostle labour to prove the vanity of all human dependance. I have been thinking as

I read these chapters, how entirely the walk of a believer depends on his faith in Christ, and how closely connected the holiness, and the comfort, and the reliance of the soul are with each other." He proceeded to comment on the fifth and sixth chapters, as a train of experimental and practical reasoning deduced from those which preceded them, adding, "but the seventh and eighth chapters have been my delight. I have found my own case so exactly, and so clearly described in the seventh, and have been so much comforted by St. Paul's description of his own feelings about sin and Christ, as I can never express. And then the eighth crowns the whole. Oh, what a chapter is *that!* Every word has given me instruction, strength, and comfort." I here said, "And can you make an inward application of the latter part of that chapter to yourself?" "Indeed papa, I hope I am not deceiving myself, but I do think I can. It lifts me up with such hope and confidence, the language is so sublime, and the doctrine so convincing. It sometimes seems too much for a sinner like me to say;—but all things

are possible with God, and he whom God saves, has a *propriety* in all things." He then went through the whole subject of the chapter, making a variety of sensible and solid remarks upon it, and entreating me to examine him as to his personal application of these glorious and gracious truths to his own heart. After he had made some animated observations on the concluding part of this chapter, he said, "But now I want to add one sentence from another part of the epistle to wind up the whole, and that is, 'Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things to whom be glory for ever, Amen.'" I shall ever retain a vivid recollection of the tone of his voice, and the sparkling look of his eye, which accompanied the utterance of these words. He became immediately much exhausted—the difficulty of

breathing increased—the fever ran very high —he bent over the table and fell into a doze, which lasted half an hour. He gradually awoke, and I observed him to fix his eyes on a globe of water which stood near the window, and contained a gold fish. I inquired what he was looking at so earnestly. He replied, "I have often watched the mechanical motion of our gold and silver fish in that globe. There is now only one left, and that seems to be weak and sickly. I wonder which of us will live the longest—the fish or I?" He paused, and then added, "That fish, my dear papa, is supported by the water in the vessel, but I hope I am supported by the water of salvation. The fish will soon die and live no more; but if I am upheld by the water of salvation, I shall live for ever."

His remark led me to make some observations on the practical use which may be made of natural objects, and the advantages of cultivating a habit of seeking something of God and the soul every where, and of accustoming the mind to seek such comparisons and allusions as tend to improve and delight it. Wil-

berforce observed, "This is the very principle exemplified in our Lord's parables, and in all the figurative language of Scripture." At this moment a gleam of light from the setting sun shone upon the gold fish, and produced a brilliant reflection from its scales, as it swam in the glass vessel. "Look," said he, "at its beauty now." "So, my dear boy, may a bright and more glorious sun shine upon you, and gild the evening of your days." "I hope," he replied, "although I sometimes feel a cloud and a doubt pass across my mind, that in the evening-time there shall be light, and then in his light I shall see light."

Thus, the gold fish furnished us with a kind of parable. It so happened that the fish survived my son two or three weeks, but I never afterwards saw it without a lively recollection of the conversation to which it gave rise; and the ideas associated with it still mingle with the cherished moments of his latter end.

## CHAPTER V.

THE two following chapters are in the language of Wilberforce's sister.

From this time my brother kept his room, being too weak to be removed to the study. He sat up during a part of the day in his arm-chair, and conversed with his father in the same strain of elevated piety. His mind was at times strong and vigorous, full of faith, rejoicing in the prospect of death, his heart trusting in God,—then trembling and leaning on his spiritual guide, who watched over him with the overflowings of tenderness, gratitude, and love, while his dying son besought him to probe his inmost soul. My father, when with us, usually preserved a dignified composure; speaking little, and with tears; pouring forth his soul in the family devotions; and seeming to say, "He will soon leave me, but blessed be the name of the Lord."

I returned to Turvey on the 10th of January.

My father met me in the hall. He wept much as he told me there was no hope of Willy's life; but he soon recovered himself and said that the agony of bereavement was forgotten in the blessed thought, that he had trained up a child for glory. He then took me up stairs, where I found the dear invalid in a chair before the fire, looking very pale and emaciated, but with a countenance full of peace and love. His eye glistened as I entered. He leaned his head on my shoulder, but was too deeply moved to utter a word. He continued silent a long time, and scarcely spoke or answered the usual inquiries of affection. In the evening he revived, and seemed disposed to converse. I asked if he could view the approach of death without fear.

"Yes, dear F——, I have no wish to stay one day longer on earth, but I must not be impatient. Lord Jesus! come quickly! If it be thy will, I would not linger here, but I pray for patience. Ah! F—— how I long to be free from this poor body, and see my Saviour's face. You can never know how I long for this, till you also have heaven in view. I

know in whom I have trusted. He will save me, for he has promised, and he never changes." He then fell into a kind of stupor, murmuring distinctly, "Christ the sinner's hope." When he awoke, the fever was very high, and his mind seemed to wander. My father entered. He looked up and said, "He fights hard and I fight hard, but Christ fights harder." He began to pray aloud, struggling for strength and thought, and intreating God that he might not be given up to delirium, of which he had a great dread, and then he praised and blessed God for giving him strength to offer another prayer.

I sat up with him the greater part of the night. He once startled me with the energy with which after a long silence he cried out, "I know in whom I am trusting. I know he never yet left one soul that trusted in him. I will not doubt." He passed a painful night, with alternate fits of fever and shivering. He continually expressed a fear that the fever would occasion delirium. He felt his time so precious, that he could not bear to lose a moment

by insensibility ; he exclaimed with the utmost vehemence, "O God! most merciful !—O God! do not afflict me with the greatest of all evils, insanity. I long to glorify thee in my death. Can I glorify thee in delirium, when I know thee not ? Yet not my will but thine be done."

About five o'clock on Wednesday morning he said, "Now call up papa, and ask him to come and talk with me. I feel as if I should have much to suffer to-day, and I want him here that I may call up some comfort and strength." He came immediately. I retired and did not hear their conversation.

After breakfast I returned to relieve my father, who, amidst his daily sufferings, was not unmindful of his family or his parish. "*I must work while it is called to-day*," seemed to be the prevailing sentiment of his mind, and his beloved child's death gave additional weight to the admonition, "what thou doest, do with all thy might."

Wilberforce sat silent for some time, then looked up and said, "Come, and sit close to me. Let me lean on you." Then putting

his arms round me, he exclaimed, "God bless you, my dear"—He was agitated and ceased speaking. Presently he said—"I must leave you—we shall walk no further through this world together—but I hope we shall meet in heaven. Let us now talk of heaven. Do not weep for me, dear F——, do not weep, for I am very happy; but think of me, and let the thought make you press forward. I never knew happiness till I knew Christ as a Saviour." He then exhorted and encouraged me to study the Bible with perseverance. "Read the Bible—read the Bible. Let no religious book take its place;—through all my perplexities and distresses, I never read any other book, and I never felt the want of any other. It has been my hourly study, and all my knowledge of the doctrines, and all my acquaintance with the experience and realities of religion have been derived from the Bible only. I think religious people do not read the Bible enough. Books about religion may be useful, but they will not do instead of the simple truth of the Bible." He then spoke of his regret at parting with us. "Nothing con-

vinces me more of the reality of the change within me, than the feelings with which I can contemplate a separation from my family. I now feel so weaned from the earth, my affections so much in heaven, that I can leave you all without a regret. Yet I do not love you less, but God more." I asked him whether his mind had been distressed for the last few months at the thought of parting from us,—for knowing the strength of his affections, I fancied he must have suffered much in subduing and controlling them. "Oh! my dear F——, the pain, the agony I have felt, when I said to myself 'I must leave them all.'—You will never know what bitter hours I have passed; none but God knows what it cost me to break those ties which bound me so strongly to earth. Never, never will you know what I suffered, as I looked at you all, and felt my strength declining, and remembered it must soon be a last look. I thought this must be the bitterness of death; and even after I had found acceptance and peace with God, I still suffered deeply in the prospect of separation, and never supposed I could willingly part from

my family. I knew that God would support me, and carry me through this trial; but a trial I felt it must be to the last;—and yet, see me now in the immediate prospect of parting—I am quite happy, and can leave you all without a tear—I know God can unite us all again; and I can trust him here as I can in every thing else. Now this change must have been effected by God. It is so evident, I cannot mistake it. I could not have acquired this composure myself, God has done it, but I have suffered much in the process." He always appeared comforted when he heard that any one had prayed for him, and frequently entreated those about him to pray, but he used to add, "Do not pray for my life, but that I may have comfort in death." I was writing to W—— and asked him if he had any message to send. He said, "They have been very kind to me, but I am too ill to think of them." Afterwards seeming to recollect himself, he said, "Come and hold my head while I try to remember them. I would send some message. Tell dear M—— that I am suffering very much, but I can and do rejoice in my

sufferings, for every pain is bringing me nearer to heaven. I shall not see her again in this world:" here he seemed quite exhausted. After a while he revived a little. "I want to say something to dear Mr. W——, you told me he had been praying for me. I wish him to know how much I have been comforted by this. How grateful I feel to him, tell him how much I value his prayers, and that they have been answered; for Christ is now precious to me. Through him the fear of death is taken away. I want to tell him more. If I can I will to-morrow, but say this." He now became exceedingly ill: he breathed with great difficulty; he panted for breath, and his struggles were distressing. The sufferings of his body affected his mind, and he seemed to lose his comfort and confidence in Christ. He cried out many times, "Oh! pray for me, pray for me, pray for me. This is hard to bear, how different the pains of death are from any other. It is such a struggle to get free." He appeared to suffer much in his mind. My father said, "My dear boy, Christ is still with you. Where he once fixes his

love, he never takes it away. You may not see him just now, but he is not the less near to you. Nothing can, nothing shall separate you from Christ." Willy cried out, "And did not he say, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" Then he twice repeated, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." "Oh! papa!—what shall I do—I am suffering so very much!" "Not one pang too many, my child," said his weeping father, while the big tears rolled down his cheek. "I know it, papa," he answered, "I believe it, I feel it." He continued in a state of suffering nearly the whole day. Towards evening he sank into a sort of lethargy. He seemed scarcely to know any thing that was passing. About eleven o'clock at night my father read the 23d Psalm, and prayed with him. He was able to attend, and it seemed to cheer him. He was better in the morning, and had much comfortable conversation with his father throughout the day. Mr. G—— came to see him. Willy wished to converse with him. He was fearful at first, and expressed some

doubt of his salvation; but Mr. G—— encouraged him by his remarks. He assured him that Christ would never give up a soul who had fled to him for refuge. Here Willy interrupted him, "I believe it, yes, I believe it. Christ has brought me thus far, and he will not leave me. He has said, 'whosoever cometh unto me, I will in *no wise* cast out.' I feel now quite certain that Christ will save me." He then adverted to his love for us, and the parting with us. "We have been a happy family; so closely united! Every two of us can say, how dearly we love each other—Our love has been more than common—I think we shall be a family of love in heaven—Two of us are in heaven already, and there will soon be a third—Oh, I feel persuaded we shall meet again." Mr. G—— proposed to read a chapter in the Bible. Willy said he could listen, and Mr. G—— chose parts of the last two chapters of the book of Revelations. He appeared greatly refreshed. His face beamed with joy while he listened to the sublime and glorious description of the new Jerusalem, and anticipated the moment of his

own entrance into the holy city, to go out no more for ever; when he should join the melody of the heavenly choir, and make one of the countless throng before the throne of God. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." After a short pause he said to Mr. G——, "Tell me about the song of Moses and the Lamb, my memory is failing. Repeat it to me." Mr. G—— repeated from Rev. xv. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of Saints; who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest."

Mr. G—— took leave of him, and some time after his departure, Willy said, "Mr. G—— seemed sent to bring the close of the Bible to be the consolation of the close of my life. It is singular that he should have fixed on those chapters, for I have read them so often; again and again in my hours of sorrow, longing, praying, but not daring to believe I

should ever be admitted to that glorious company; how have I wept over them!"

Mr. F. paid him a visit, and Wilberforce was very earnest in pressing him to examine the state of his mind, saying, "I would neither deceive nor be deceived." Mr. F—— replied, "You are now too much exhausted for conversation; I have heard from your papa the state of your mind, and I am quite satisfied with his opinion of you, for our ideas of true conversion are the same." "Yes," said he, "but I would rather you should examine for yourself,—I want you also to search me."

He asked Mr. F—— whether the feeling of assurance was necessary to salvation. "I do not," he said, "always feel alike; sometimes when illness overpowers me, my comfort is gone, and I am afraid that after all I shall perish; but I know that in my darkest season I still love my Saviour above every thing."

"My dear Wilberforce," said Mr. F——, "you cannot have a more able counsellor in your perplexities, than your affectionate father, and your very weak state inclines me to be brief. Our religion may be explained in few

words, at least as far as it is necessary to your peace and safety. You must have a title to heaven, and a meetness for its enjoyment; you need not now trouble yourself on other points. The title is Christ's merits. Do you rest on them alone for acceptance with God?"

"Oh yes; I have no other hope or trust. If I have confidence or comfort, I get it only there." "Well, then, the next thing is a meetness for heaven. If any man belong to Christ he has the mind of Christ; he is a new creature; religion is his life as well as his peace." "Indeed, indeed," he replied, "I do love Christ; I long to be where he is, to dwell with him for ever." "Then all is safe, Wilberforce; I am quite satisfied that he who has worked the one in you, has procured the other for you." "But your eye, Mr. F——, your eye looks as if it doubted of me." "No, my dear Wilberforce, I am not doubting, I am looking on you with a deep interest."

Mr. F—— went away with a promise to see him again in a few days, but my brother died before the time fixed for another visit.

He slept for some time, and then suddenly

sat up in his chair with apparent ease; he breathed freely, spoke distinctly, seemed free from pain, and his countenance looked satisfied and happy. I was quite surprised at the change, and said, "My dear Willy, you seem much better." "Yes," he answered, "I am much better. This is a precious moment, and now I hope I shall be able to talk to you a little. This is an answer to prayer, dear F—. I have much longed to glorify God in my death, and ever since last Sunday I have been praying for one hour of ease and strength to speak to you all for the last time, and tell you what I now think of religion. Hitherto you have seen me so overpowered by disease, that you could not judge of my comfort and confidence in my principles. But God has granted my request and I will glorify him." He then began an interesting conversation, and spoke with astonishing ease. He was very plain and sincere. He told me kindly of faults and errors which he had observed in me; and he endeavoured to correct them, and encouraged me from his own experience to persevere in striving against them. "My dear,

my very dear F——," he said, "I hope we shall meet in heaven. I could not talk to you in this calm manner, if I did not believe we should meet again. But you have much to learn—much to do before you can get there. There is but one road, and without an entire dedication of the heart to God, you cannot walk in it." He spoke of the dangers of a religious education; of having the form of religion, while the heart was still unchanged, and the will unsubdued. He spoke also of what he called *sentimental religion*, telling me how easy it was to write in beautiful poetic language without any real feeling of heart; and he mentioned some instances where religion was but a bright fiction of the imagination; and others where it proved itself a transforming principle in the life and conduct. "My dear sister, be a *real* disciple—Be in earnest—You will want *heart* religion when you come to die—The poetry of religion will not do then;"—reminding me of some letters I had written to him. He again recommended to me most earnestly the constant study of the Bible. "Here," he said, "I speak in a

peculiar manner from recent experience—For the last three months the Bible has been my sole instructor—It has gradually led me on to clear light and real experience, till every promise is my own—I have read the greater part of it through several times during my illness—and often on a Sunday, when I have spent the day alone, I have read the whole of the New Testament, unable to leave off till I had grasped all the mind of the Spirit at once. Perhaps papa has thought I read too few religious books—He has looked anxious at my neglect of many he put in my way—I do not give myself in this respect for an example—but I have found little benefit from books, sermons, or conversations—The Bible, the Bible alone has taught me every thing. If I read books on religion, however excellent, the thought always haunted me—this is human—it may be wrong. I could not rest till I went to the Bible. Here I felt all was divine and infallible; and I found such comfort in the simple truth of God's word, that I set aside every other book dissatisfied. I may be earnest then, in pressing you to go to the Bible."

He then said, "But you must pray over the Bible—without the teaching of the Spirit it will do you no good, you must apply it as you go on to yourself, and feel it personally, or you will get no benefit, though you stand the whole day over it.—I have been in the habit of reading the Bible on my knees, and I recommend you to do the same. It encourages prayer. I have found it very useful to turn Scripture into prayer, using the very words. There is not a psalm I have not turned into a prayer. I have felt so safe in making prayers from the Bible because then I knew I could not err; and let prayer always be preceded by self-examination; lay your heart bare before God; indulge not even a doubtful feeling; one secret sin will cloud all."

I had marked the depression of his spirit when the symptoms of his disease appeared more unfavourable, and I asked him if he had any fear of death now. He answered me with great firmness,—"No, not any—I have unshaken confidence in Jesus as a Saviour—He has taken away the sting of death, and for his sake the Father will receive me as a child."

I replied, "You had, dear Willy, great doubts of your salvation, and many fears of death during some periods of your illness." "Oh! yes, indeed I had! I have been on the verge of despair, and have known its agonies.—My pain of body was at times very great, but nothing in comparison with the agony of my spirit. I struggled on in darkness and in silence. It was known only to myself and God, but I was supported and carried through all, and now I would encourage you, my dearest sister, by telling you what succeeded in my case. I will tell you just what I did. After a season of much doubt and terror, during which I felt as if all was delusion, and I should be cast into hell, I determined to go at once boldly to God, in the name of Christ, and plead the promises which were then before me in the Bible. I fell down upon my knees—I groaned—I wept—I prayed most fervently—I said, Here I am, Lord, a poor perishing sinner—My sins are heavy and alarming—I cannot bear them myself—I feel my body decaying—I must soon die, and I dare not appear before Thee, the pure and holy God, as I now

am—I read of a Saviour thou hast provided for sinners, and I come to him to be saved from eternal death—I come to the cross of Christ—I cling to it as my only hope—If thou, O Christ, will not save me, no one else can, and I must perish—Lord, save me—Jesus! have mercy on me! I persevered thus again and again—I kept on praying in this way—I took nothing with me but a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, and I said, 'Lord! I will not go except thou bless me!' I know I prayed sincerely, and I was heard and answered. I found that promise true, 'Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' God was good to me. My soul required severe discipline, but he comforted me in his own time—I found Christ able and willing to do all I required—I was enabled to receive him as my complete salvation, and I sometimes had such peace in believing on him, such hours of unspeakable happiness, that the remembrance of it makes up for all this suffering. I never again lost my hope with Christ, though for the moment my disease overpowered me and clouded the past. Now I tell

you all this for your encouragement and direction. Seek as I did, and you will find the same pardon for sin, the same peace in death." We next talked about prayer. I told him of the difficulties I felt. I remember well his eager look as he said, "Not find comfort in prayer, dear F——? It sounds like a strange contradiction to me—It is my only comfort. When I am able to pray, I am sure to be happy, and my prayer is that I may have strength and sense to pray. But I must remember how differently we are circumstanced—I am just entering eternity—I see every thing in a new light, as I never did before—as none but a dying person can see—All my thoughts and feelings are changed—I have not memory now to recollect how I used to feel, when I first began to pray—Perhaps I had the same doubts; my memory is gone—Oh! how the Lord has humbled me—I used to be so proud of my understanding—I can now scarcely answer the simplest question." Presently he seemed to gather strength and said, "We were talking about prayer; yes, all my comfort is in prayer. There *must* be comfort in prayer—The chief

thing is to examine your heart—Ask God to search it for you—Take care you are cherishing no secret sin or hidden idol. God is a merciful God, but he is a jealous God, and he will have the whole heart—Only persevere in praying, and indeed you will find comfort in prayer. He then told me how seriously it had been impressed upon his mind, that his death was to be the life of others. "I think, my dearly loved sister, it is for your good; and will not this thought make you more in earnest? *Oh! I would die ten painful deaths to save one soul!* We shall meet again in heaven. Now come and kiss me, and let me lean upon you." He rested a short time and said, "Now send for H——, I want to speak to her while my strength lasts." His conversation with her was very searching, but very affectionate. He loved this sister very dearly. She was naturally volatile and buoyant in her spirits, and this disposition sometimes betrayed her into levity. The liveliness of her conversation had often pleased him, but he now thought he had encouraged her in some things inconsistent with real piety. He was earnest

beyond his strength in conversing with her. He put very plain and close questions;—saying, "I must be answered; I must speak plainly; I am afraid, my beloved sister, you do not think enough about religion. I do not see decided proofs of real conversion in you. I have not a *sure* hope, that if you die as you now are, I shall meet you in heaven. Oh! H——, it is my last request—with my dying breath I am entreating you to seek the salvation of your soul. Suppose you were in my place—in this chair instead of me—waiting for death day by day—could you meet it as I do? Oh! do, my dear sister! do think of death while you are in health. If I had not sought Christ before I was brought so low, I should have no strength or sense to seek him now. I went to Jesus as a poor weak sinner, and found sweet rest, and I am happy now amidst all this suffering." He spoke in a very affectionate manner of the subject nearest her heart. "Your merry peal will soon succeed my death-knell. Take care that the good seed is not choked by the pleasures of life! Seek first the kingdom of God. Remember

H——, *you have to die.* Oh! I cannot leave you in peace, unless I have a good hope that I shall meet you in heaven. If I thought there was one amongst you—oh! I cannot bear that thought!" He continued, "H——, there is nothing so opposed to religion,—to the mind of Christ, as levity and trifling. It will keep you back more than anything. Take my solemn warning—I speak from my own experience,—you will never be a consistent Christian, and you will never grow in grace, if you indulge in *habitual* trifling conversation. It is not like the mind of Christ; your temper is very playful and volatile, and Satan may use it as a snare to injure your soul. *Piety and levity cannot long dwell in the same heart.* One will destroy the other. * * *
You see dear H——, I am very plain and sincere. I used to be so shy. But I do not feel afraid of speaking my mind now. How little does one care about the world and its opinions when death is near; death takes away all reserve. I care not if the whole world were assembled around me—I would tell them what I now think of religion—I should like

to see many here, that I might tell them what the Lord hath done for my soul." He then sent for H——, his favourite brother and companion. Willy was much affected. He seemed to say farewell to H—— with deep emotion. He entreated him to supply his place in every thing—particularly in being a comfort to his father, and filling his place in the ministry. On this latter subject he spoke much. He said, "From a child it has been my delight to think of being a clergyman of the Church of England; but it is God's will to pass me by, and take you, dear H——, and honour you thus. I resign my place to you—Fill it faithfully."—Then turning to his father, he said, "Give H—— a double portion of your love. He is to fill my place, as well as his own, to you. I make a transfer to him of all the affection you have borne to me." He paused for breath and then continued. "We have loved each other very dearly, we always loved as brothers amidst our little quarrels—did we not? I love you now more than ever, and I must talk to you about your soul." He ad-

dressed him in very plain language, asking him questions. H—— seemed confused and distressed, for there were others present. Willy said, "Poor H——, you feel shy on this subject—I used to feel the same once—I could not speak once, but that reserve is all gone. I am not ashamed to say what I feel now. You will feel as I do, some day." He then begged that all would retire and leave H—— alone with him. No one heard the conversation which passed between them. He next sent for his younger brothers:—They wept much as he addressed them. He spoke very touchingly to his youngest sister, who was then a little child. "Would you like to meet poor Willy in heaven, dear C——, then you must love God. Pray to God to make you love him, and to make you a good child. Will you promise me one thing, my dear C——, that you will never go out of your room in the morning till you have read a few verses in the Bible, and pray edto God? If you do not pray to God, you will not meet poor Willy in heaven. I will give you a verse to think of when

I am dead. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Say that verse to yourself every night when you lie down."

## CHAPTER VI.

He sent for several people in the village to come and bid him farewell. There was one old person for whom he had a special regard. She had been much with him in his childhood, and he used to tell her, "if he lived to be a man, and had a house of his own, she should come and keep it." He held out his hand to her affectionately, and, alluding to his promise said, "I shall have no house in this world, Nanny, for you to come and keep —but I shall still have a house—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." His countenance, as he spoke, assumed a singularly sweet and happy expression—such a beaming look of love and joy, that every one noticed it. The hectic flush glowed on his cheek—his eyes sparkled with a peculiar lustre—and the marble forehead was smooth and placid. It was the parting loveliness of a body irradiated by a soul full of meekness,

calmness, joy, and confidence. Instead of being exhausted by such lengthened conversations, as we expected, he seemed full of vigour, and rather refreshed. He conversed a good deal with both his parents. "What a striking answer," he said, "I have had to prayer; God has allowed me time and strength to speak to you all, and has so filled me with sweet peace and joy, that I never could have conceived there was such happiness to be known here." He then said, "I should like the whole family to assemble round me, that I may look at you altogether, while I am so happy." He then offered up a fervent and touching prayer to God, blessing him for his great goodness, and commending us to him for salvation. He paused a moment and concluded, "Lord! now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

He remained in this happy frame of mind a short time, when all seemed to pass away as a dream: the fever returned—great suffering succeeded—his whole frame was agitated. At intervals he referred to the past season of happiness, and the recollection of it comforted

him. He repeated what he had before said, several times, "I would go through all again for one such sweet hour."

In the evening he was dejected by a dread of delirium, and prayed earnestly that he might retain his senses to the last, often exclaiming, "I cannot glorify thee in delirium." He called this a happy day, because he thought he had done good by his faithful addresses.

My father came to read and pray with him, before he retired to rest. Willy said, "I am too tired to listen. I should like to dream of the past; papa, there will be no distraction in heaven."

Friday was a mournful day. My brother's sufferings were greatly increased. He could find no position in which to rest. He breathed with difficulty, and at times seemed almost suffocated; and the soul, as if in sympathy with the body, became full of doubt and terror. He called out in great agitation—"Oh! pray for me—pray for me—say something to comfort me. I read him some verses from the 43d of Isaiah. He continued to exclaim—"Oh! pray for me, pray for me! I am in great

suffering." I opened the Annals of the Poor, and read to him the account of the Dairyman's Daughter's last hours. He listened attentively, and then repeated the words, "The Lord deals very gently with me, and gives me peace. It is not dark, my Lord is there, and he is my light and salvation." He appeared a little more composed, and I turned to the tract of Little Jane. I read to him some passages. "Ah!" said he, "they got safe through, and why not I? I am glad, dear F——, that you thought of the Dairyman's Daughter and Little Jane. They are just the examples I want. They suffered much, but it was not dark to them. Oh, death! death! what is it? I have still to go through death—the dark valley." He sat for some time in silence, with his head resting on the table. Though he did not speak, I could perceive that there was something passing in his mind which shook his whole frame. Suddenly, with a wild expression of countenance, and in a bitter tone, he exclaimed—"Oh! agony! agony! agony! agony! I shall perish after all." I was much frightened, and went to call my father. I told him Willy must be delirious. When my fa-

ther saw him, he said, "Oh no! this is not delirium. I know exactly what he is passing through." He sat down beside Wilberforce, and began to talk soothingly to him, but he refused to be comforted. He still cried out with his whole remaining strength—"Oh agony! agony! agony! Satan will have me after all —Papa, pray for me, he tells me I shall be lost—He tells me my sins will damn me—Oh, papa, this is agony!—all is dark, dark—all gone—all lost—and has Christ brought me thus far to leave me at last?" My dear father was much overcome at this scene, and struggled hard for composure. He repeated text after text; and with apparent calmness, and in his own tender and peculiar manner, enlarged on the faithful love of the Saviour. He assured Willy of his full persuasion that Christ's honour was pledged in presenting his soul safe to the Father: that this was the last attack of Satan: that he took advantage of his bodily weakness, to distress, when he could not harm him. But poor Willy seemed still more agitated. The cold drops stood on his forehead—his look betrayed the deepest

anguish, and he shook with terror. "Oh! papa! what will become of me," he cried; "I am going into the dark valley *alone*. Jesus has left me. It is all dark, dark, dark—The rod and the staff do not support me—Satan fights hard for me, and he will carry me away at last." His bodily sufferings seemed quite forgotten, and were lost in the bitter anguish of his mind, and he still continued to repeat, "agony—agony." My dear father tried again by a variety of arguments, and by a frequent appeal to Scripture, to support his despairing child, but in vain. He seemed given up for a time to such sharp and sore besetments as baffled all attempts to administer comfort. After a silence of some minutes, and when he seemed nearly fainting, my dear father solemnly repeated, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." These were the first words that made any impression on Wilberforce. He said, "Ah! papa, I used to love those words, but they are gone—I will try to understand them—Say them again." My father repeated the affecting words of the Saviour to

his tempted disciple. Willy listened to them with intense interest. When he heard the words, "but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," he exclaimed, "Oh, my dear papa, do you think that Christ is praying for me? Does he pray for me in this hour of darkness, when I have no faith?" "Certainly, my dear boy, I cannot doubt it. I am quite sure he is praying for you at this instant. Take courage then. Do you think God will not hear Christ's prayer? Him the Father heareth always." His mind became a little calmer, but he still looked uneasy, and replied slowly, "Can I have been brought to love him so, only to perish? Can such feelings as I have —such a hatred of sin, be fitting me for hell? No, it cannot be—Such feelings could not exist in hell—He will save me as the chief of sinners." Presently he exclaimed, "Jesus has not left me. I see him again—more precious than ever—my Saviour—my hope. How could I distrust him—I am more than conqueror. Papa, I feel safe—I am Christ's—Why did I doubt? I am so strengthened. Dear papa, I can give you no idea of the anguish of my heart. It exceeded all I supposed

endurable; I thought myself in Satan's hands —it must have been such anguish as this which made the Saviour cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I never knew what suffering was before—I thought I was lost." "And what do you now think?" "I have great peace, firm confidence—I am so strengthened, papa, in my faith—so strengthened—hell shall not prevail; Christ has saved me—none shall pluck me out of his hand. I should not be afraid to grapple with this dreadful foe again—I should not be afraid if Jesus were standing by"—and then shuddering at his own recollections, he added, "But papa, I hope God will not see it necessary to try me in this way again; I hope not—It was indeed a dreadful struggle." "Why say so?" said his father, "it is possible God may see fit thus to try your faith again. You see how he has supported you—*you* have been the conqueror--why then shrink?"

"Oh no! I will not shrink, I could go through it again if it were God's will—I could not see my Saviour in that dark hour, but now I know he was near me." And then shuddering at his own words, he added, "but I

hope it it will not be necessary again to try me thus."

This last sorrow attached him more than ever to his father. He could not bear that he should be out of his sight, and listened to every word which fell from him, with the most grateful love and confiding simplicity. He truly hung upon his lips. Never was there a more affecting sight, than to behold this loving father and no less loving son, now blending every feeling and thought of their hearts together, and so closely united in religious intercourse, that they seemed as it were a twin soul.

My father was obliged to leave Wilberforce for a little while; on his return, the latter looking up with a smile said, "Papa, I cannot pray now—I am so very ill; but I have been *praising*." "For what, my dear boy?" "I have been blessing God for giving me such a father:—when I can say nothing else, I can praise God for such a dear father, to whom I can tell all, and who helps me on to heaven." This was almost too much for my father; he could neither speak nor weep, he seemed ab-

sorbed in unutterable feeling—the fountain of tears was dried up.

Willy did not wait for a reply. "I am sorry, papa, I did not open my mind to you before, how much happier I should have been, if I had done so. I have now no reserve—I can tell you every thing—You *are* my friend and my guide—my dear, dear papa, I *do* love you. You have so helped me in my great trial."

In the evening he conversed with my father on the bitter agony through which he had passed in the morning, with calmness and faith. Some one present asked him what he thought to be the best evidence of conversion—"A broken heart and a contrite spirit," he replied. "This is what I brought to God, and it was the only evidence I could rely on."

The next day he expressed some impatience at lingering so long, earnestly desiring that this might be his last day, but he soon checked himself, and prayed against a restless spirit. He sometimes cried out, "How long, how long! when shall I be free! How my spirit struggles to get away from this poor weary body! Papa, do you think I shall lin-

ger here another day?" and without waiting for a reply he said, "but my times are in thy hands, O God—I must die daily—I will patiently wait thy will." He called me to him, and gave me a copy of Miss Jerram's Memoir. He said it had been of great use to him, and that God's dealings with her had sometimes comforted him. "We both passed through great sorrows, but God comforted us both in his own time. Read it dear F——; I give you my copy—I have no further need of it; and may God bless it to you." He asked to have the 17th chapter of St. John read to him, and remarked, "how very plain is the doctrine of that chapter. I wonder there should be so much controversy about it."

"What is to-morrow?" he asked, "It is the Sabbath." He seemed pleased, and earnestly begged that the congregation might be requested to pray for him in the Church. On Sunday morning he was much weaker, and his end was evidently fast approaching. To a kind friend who had nursed him, he said, "How do I look now?" She saw the approach of death in his languid eye and pallid countenance. "You look worse, master Wil-

berforce, I do not think that you can live much longer." The effect produced by her opinion was truly astonishing. His dim eye lighted up, all his features assumed a new life, and turning to her, he said, "Oh, thank you, dear Mrs. G——, good news! you tell me good news. Shall I indeed be in heaven to-day?" My father came into the room. "Papa," said he, "how do I look—am I altered?" "No, my dear boy. I see little difference in you." He was evidently disappointed. "Do you see no difference," said he, "Mrs. G—— does. She made me so happy. She thinks I may die to-day." My father sat with him the whole of the day while we were at Church, and Willy asked him to read the service for the visitation of the sick. He listened with devout attention, and when it was ended, he said, "Oh my dear papa, what beautiful prayers! what an affecting service! it expresses my whole heart."

He then said to his mother, "I love to look at you, mamma. I love to smile at you, but I want to smile at Jesus." He asked her to draw near, and let him lean on her bosom. "It is sweet to lean on you, dear mamma,—

but I long to lean on the bosom of Jesus." He conversed with his father in the afternoon for the last time.

He had been accustomed to teach a class in the Sunday school, and begged that his dying message might be written down and sent to the children that evening. He had not been able to lie in bed for a week, owing to the pain in his side, but on Sunday evening he expressed a wish to be undressed and put into bed, being inclined to sleep. He was accordingly put into bed, and lay very tranquil and comfortable. My father stood watching beside him till he thought him asleep. He then went to his study, as he afterwards told us, to pray that, if it were God's will, his child might have quiet and ease in his last moments; for he much dreaded the severity of a dying agony, which from the past he thought probable. As he was going away he blessed him, and looking at him as he lay, serene and beautiful in his repose, he said, "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Willy opened his eyes on hearing these words, and replied, "Yes, dear papa, and the rest which Christ

gives is sweet." These were his last words. He immediately sunk into a long and peaceful slumber. We were sitting near him. Mrs. ——, his faithful nurse, stood and watched beside him. We could hear distinctly every breath he drew, and the least change in the sound was perceptible. One or two breathings were slower and longer, which made us get up and look at him. He appeared as if slumbering very sweetly. There was no alteration in his countenance, and we were going to sit down again, when Mrs. —— said, "call your papa immediately." We did so, and he came just in time to hear his last sigh. I think he awoke from sleep but felt no pain, nor was sensible of death. My father raised Willy's head upon his arm, and contemplated it for a minute. The countenance looked placid, as if it had beheld the Saviour's face in righteousness, and was satisfied. My father pressed the lifeless body to his bosom, and burst into a flood of tears, struggling with nature's anguish. At length subduing his feelings, he said, "My child is a saint in glory." He bid us all follow him to the study, that we might praise God for his mercy and loving-

kindness. He opened the Bible and read the last two chapters of the Book of Revelations, and then knelt down and prayed with us. It was a moment not to be forgotten. Our dear father appeared so absorbed in the contemplation of his child's entrance into heaven, and its union with the spirits of the just made perfect, as to be scarcely conscious of the presence of his family around him.

Between the death and the funeral of my brother, my dear father's mind was often severely exercised. Sometimes he would weep, and say, "All thy waves and storms are gone over me," and then, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." "He giveth and he taketh away, and blessed be his holy name." He would rise early in the morning to gaze on the peaceful countenance of his departed child. We overheard him giving vent to the mingled emotion of his heart in the chamber of death. But he was comforted in tribulation, and he returned to his family, to sooth their sorrows with the comfort wherewith he was comforted of God. He said little, but his calm and subdued spi-

rit bespoke Christian resignation. He used to teach us that disquiet was the result of distrust, and we saw in his silent submission an example of his own principle, that his heart trusted in God. "Though his hand be lifted up to destroy, yet from that very hand do I expect salvation."*

A vault was opened for Wilberforce under the chancel. An incident occurred which much affected us, and which showed the pious and affectionate sympathy of the people in the sorrows of their pastor. The workmen had not completed the vault till past eleven o'clock at night, when they agreed to descend into it, and consecrate the place which was shortly to receive our brother's remains, by prayer. The sepulchre of the dead became holy ground. They joined in praises to Him who is the resurrection and the life, and who has enlightened the gloomy grave by his own presence. They contiuued in prayer till midnight, commending their beloved minister to the grace of God—invoking blessings on his

* Leighton.

family, and entreating that this mournful event might be over-ruled to the increase of religion in the parish;—and may we not hope that prayer was heard? The subsequent state of the village may be described as life from the dead. In the morning of my brother's interment, my father prayed with his family. I trust that the spirit of God poured out his special influence on the minds of those present. A friend afterwards observed, "This is the fervent prayer of a righteous man, which availeth much. Can we doubt that it is recorded in heaven, and will long be remembered on earth.

From this time, our dear father gave himself up to the work of the ministry with re-doubled diligence. The congregations were large and attentive. He went daily from cottage to cottage amongst the poor, warning, exhorting, comforting, and confirming the souls of the disciples in the grace of God. He used to meet persons nearly every evening in the week, for prayer and exposition of the Scriptures. Many a heart in Turvey still glows at the recollection of these seasons. There was

a general revival of religion both amongst old and young, and scarcely a day passed in which some one did not anxiously inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" There might be in this excitement something that was of a doubtful character, but there were certainly many real conversions, and a general and increased attention towards religion, unknown at any former period.

THE END.

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